

# POOSH PART I

My experiences with Indians

By Harry Jivenmukta



# POOSH

# PART I

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Over the years, I have had lots of experiences with Indians, both in my family and others. These three works are just a few of the ones I remember as being notable. They happened both in India and in the UK,



# CURD

He just wanted some  
Curd with his chapattis  
But it had finished.

He was finished,  
Always second best  
In the family.

The final cut was  
The end of the curd.  
Tomorrow, he was told,  
You can have as much  
Curd as you want.

Tomorrow was a  
Long way away  
So he put down  
His tray,  
Chapattis half finished,  
Stomach half full,  
And walked off  
To the fields.

To the well that  
Had no walls  
But had snakes.

He paused to look  
Up at the Panjabi sun  
And plunged to his  
Death  
Because there was no curd.



# STORIES

My father always told  
Stories in the same way.  
Starting with someone  
No one else knew,  
He had to explain the connection.

He was such and such's son  
His granddad was so and so  
His farm was just outside the village  
He's the one who had  
One leg shorter than the other  
His uncle is the one who  
Got run over  
His son runs a shop in  
Such and such a town.

In the end we rarely  
Got to the story at all  
But we did know who  
The main character was.  
We were still no wiser.



# EXTRACTING TEETH

He said to my father  
I hear you can take  
Teeth out.

My father answered  
Yes if you really need  
Them out.

In the end they had  
To pay for the broken  
Window as my  
Father punched him  
Out on to the street.

They were still very good friends.



# CHICKEN

A regular event was  
When my father got home  
From work carrying  
A potato sack.  
We knew inside was a  
Chicken, its neck stretched.

After a while my father  
Would clear the kitchen table  
And we would all scatter  
In excitement and fear.

He'd start plucking the bird  
And feathers would fly  
And we would peep  
Round the door  
And shriek, and run, and  
return.  
The worst bit was when he  
Removed the innards.  
The stink and smell.

A few hours later we would  
All dig in and enjoy  
The wonderful taste  
And the few feathers  
Left uncollected  
Would sit at our feet.



# MY COUSIN'S WEDDING

She was twenty years older  
Than me.

Her father, ever the economist  
Decide to butcher his  
Own meat.

A huge carcass of a pig  
Was dragged down into the cellar  
And we children watched  
Fascinated as he reduced  
The whole animal in to bite sized  
Chunks, ready for the pot.

Another chap did the cooking.  
He was famous for  
His cooking  
But always started with  
A bottle of whisky.  
By the time he finished  
He couldn't stand up  
But the pork was delicious.



# THE GUEST

Our guest came into  
The living room early  
In the morning  
Looking quite bright for  
Someone who had been  
Very worse for wear  
The night before.

My mother,  
Unhappy in only the way a  
Woman weary of my father's  
Chums could be,  
Asked him reluctantly  
If he wanted any breakfast.

He replied  
I'll have six eggs to  
Start with  
And then I'll tell you  
What I want for breakfast.



# DENTURES

London transport have  
18,000 sets of dentures  
In their lost and found  
Department.

My father came home from  
A wedding  
Clearly the worse for wear  
And fell into an armchair.

After a while the volcano  
Inside him erupted and  
All the wedding feast was  
Sprayed around the room.

His dentures shot out  
Like a ball from a cannon.

I like to remember them  
Ricocheting around the room.  
They didn't but anyway  
I can see how dentures  
Can become a favourite  
Lost and found.



# MILK DRINK

I always got Milk Badam.  
That's a milk drink with  
Bits of almonds.

The shopkeeper was about 90  
And was very tall  
For an old man.  
He used to open the cap  
Of the bottle,  
Put his finger over the top  
And shake.  
He had long earlobes  
That flapped when he shook.  
That's the main reason  
I got milk badam.



# DRINKS AT 9 AM

My cousin many times removed  
Was in the fields when  
We arrived to visit at 9am  
But some young lad was sent  
To fetch him.  
He arrived, obviously  
Had been working hard.  
We chatted for a while  
And said we had better  
Get going and let him  
Get back to his work.  
He reached out for a jug  
Of Desi, home made spirit,  
Poured out a big glassful  
And emptied it in one.  
We all had smaller ones.  
The work is repetitive he said  
And it makes it easier.



# HEADACHE

My grandmother had a headache  
And I said I had some  
Tablets.  
Tablets from the West.  
Suddenly, it seemed everyone  
Had developed  
Devilishly painful headaches.  
My grandmother had two tablets.  
My great uncle had two.  
The woman who makes the  
Dung patties that dry out  
And are used to burn  
Had two tablets.  
A passing visitor had two  
Just in case.  
And the woman who cooks had two.  
That left two for me.



# DEATH

My cousin ran madly  
After something and his  
Mother trying to slow him down  
Unbalanced him and he caught  
His stomach on a concrete corner.

He was in pain  
So the village doctor was called  
Who left some black sticky  
Cream to rub on.

At 3.35 the next morning  
He died from internal bleeding.

At 11 am we passed through  
The village to the cremation grounds.  
I was in front with the bell  
Warning that we were bringing  
A corpse through.

My great uncle lit the fire  
And we stood around whilst my  
Young cousin, aged 11, burned.



# SETTING BONES

He was the expert in  
Setting the bones of  
Farm animals.  
Someone would turn up  
And he would reach for  
His bicycle.  
He was very old but sprightly.  
Hours later he would return  
Swaying a bit  
From side to side.  
He never charged money  
Even if it took all day  
Because it was an ability  
Given to him by a higher power.  
He never went to school  
And couldn't read or write but  
He could set bones.  
And in return would have  
A large glass of whisky  
Given by a grateful farmer.



# DRUNK

When he was drunk  
My cousin would go mad.  
One day he was angry and  
Jumped from the first  
Floor balcony  
In the village house,  
Right down onto the stone floor  
Below  
So he could tackle his father  
Over something that  
No one else cared about.



# LIZARDS

My grandmother gave up  
After the death of  
My grandfather  
And sat on her bed  
In the village house.

When we visited she  
Would perk up a bit  
But later on, later visits,  
She kept her mouth covered.  
She said it was so  
The lizards wouldn't  
Fall off the ceiling  
And into her mouth.  
We all thought about that  
But didn't think it likely.

One day we were sitting reading  
When splat!  
A lizard fell from the ceiling  
On to the floor  
And zig zagged back  
Up the wall.



# THE COIN

You'd think it was simple  
Having dropped a coin  
On the floor of the van  
Just to reach down and feel  
For it.

I've got it, I shouted  
But I had only got the  
Head of a bolt  
Fastened to the floor.

I've got it, again I was  
Busily trying to pry  
The bolt head from  
The floor.

In the end I had got it  
About five times before  
The comedy got so  
Funny  
We all creased up  
And held our bellies  
From the pain of laughing.



# THE BANK

My father was very  
Easily roused into  
Righteous rage.  
In the bank the tellers  
Were busy and at  
The desks the seniors  
Were busy.  
We were guided from desk  
To desk,  
Ages to do a bit of  
Simple banking.  
In the end my father snapped.  
Instead of signing and  
Stamping our papers  
The chap was eagerly  
Slurping his tea.  
My father ranted and raved  
At the poor chap  
Jumping him out of his chair.  
I'm sorry sir, he began  
But actually you want  
The next desk.



# BEER

Drinking beer in  
The Blue Bell Beer Bar  
One day,  
There was a huge  
Rat walking along  
The curtain rail.  
I snatched up the only  
Weapon, a fork,  
And with narrowed eyes  
Pointed it in self defence.  
The rat was only out for  
An afternoon stroll  
And ignored me completely.



# ASSASSINATION

He had insulted the  
Police chief  
But thought no more about it.  
At 8.30 one morning  
Just after he'd finished his  
Breakfast  
Four men came to his house  
In the village and  
Said there was an emergency  
And they needed his help.  
He got in the car with them  
And they drove just outside the village.

The news spread like wildfire  
When his body was discovered  
With eight bullets in his head.



# MARRIAGE COUNSELLING

Marriage counselling  
Will never be the same again.  
He was purple from  
Anger as the old  
Man said  
Perhaps they should  
Separate for a few  
Weeks and think over  
What they want to do.

Very sensible

The man with the  
Purple face replied  
With murder in  
His eyes  
Old man, keep your  
Mouth shut or I'll  
Rip your moustache  
Off and stuff it in  
Your pocket.

mmm... very reasonable.

